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SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PRESS RELEASE



Photo caption: Pictured above (L to R) are SSCC Financial Aid Director Jaime Simmons, SSCC Computer Science Assistant Professor Brian Birkhimer, 2026 COF recipient Aaliyah Gilbert, SSCC President Dr. Nicole Roades, and SSCC Strategic Project Support Specialist Lisa Hord. Not pictured are 2026 COF recipients Kyle Bailey and Ja'Nyia Hudson Childers.

Southern State Community College announces three students in the Choose Ohio First Initiative

Choose Ohio First (COF) is an initiative promoted and administered by the Ohio Department of Higher Education to bolster support for the next generation of Ohio science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) scholars and industry leaders.

As a participant in the Choose Ohio First Program, Southern State Community College has selected three qualified individuals to receive the third-year cohort scholarship. These students include Aaliyah Gilbert of Wilmington, Kyle Bailey of Hillsboro, and Ja'Nyia Hudson Childers of Hillsboro.

The scholarship will award tuition, some fees, and books to this select group of Computer Information Technology students. These students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout their program.

Southern State is proud to be part of this initiative, which provides scholarships to students desiring a certificate, associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or graduate degree in eligible STEM and STEM teaching fields through Ohio's two-year and four-year public and independent colleges and universities.

The goal of Choose Ohio First scholarships is to increase enrollment and completion in STEM fields as well as to strengthen Ohio's talent pipeline in STEM occupations and related industries.

Southern State Community College will focus the Choose Ohio First benefits on students pursuing a certificate or degree in Computer Information Technology, including focus areas of networking, robotics, cybersecurity, and programming.

"I am excited for these students who have been selected to receive the scholarship and be a part of the third cohort," said Lisa Hord, Strategic Project Support Specialist at Southern State Community College. "This is a great group of students, and I am looking forward to supporting them as they achieve their academic goals."

Students who receive a Choose Ohio First scholarship must participate in a work-based learning opportunity such as a STEM internship, co-op, or research to help them transition effectively to the STEM workforce after graduation.

Those interested in learning more about Choose Ohio First scholarship opportunities at Southern State can contact Lisa Hord at 800.628.7722, Ext. 3513 or email lhord@sscc.edu.

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